

MONTHLY FIRE WEATHER / FIRE DANGER OUTLOOK

April 2006

1. REPORTING UNIT: Northern California Geographic Area

2. DATE: March 29, 2006

THIS COMING MONTH	BELOW NORMAL	X	NORMAL		ABOVE NORMAL	
THIS SEASON	BELOW NORMAL		NORMAL	X	ABOVE NORMAL	

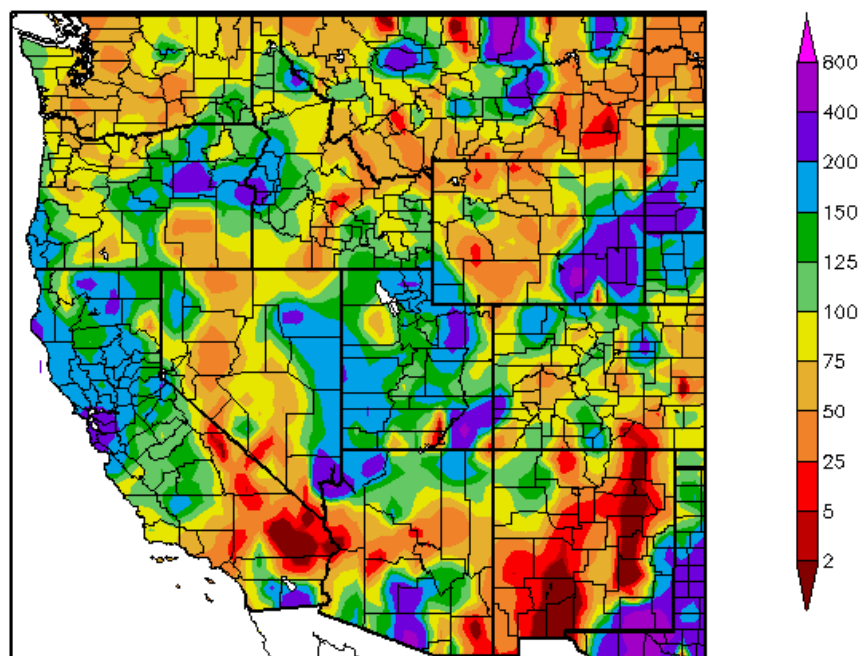
4. FIRE WEATHER OUTLOOK

Review of March 2006 weather (through the 27th):

An unseasonably deep and cool low pressure trough has dominated West coast weather for the majority of the time in March 2006. The few high pressure ridges that have developed were not strong, and have lasted just 1-3 days across North Ops. The result has been temperatures staying significantly cooler than normal throughout the GACC, with precipitation near to well above monthly normals. **Figure 1** illustrates how over 90% of the Geographic Area has had precipitation exceeding 125% of normal, while **Figure 2** shows mean temperature patterns generally departing from normal by -3 to -10° F. With a cool wet pattern in place, the mountain snowpack was added to considerably during March. Several cold storms prior to March 21st saw snow levels drop into a 1000-2500' elevation range.

With the active storm track in place March was windier than normal. Quite a few mountain RAWS have had several wind events where peak southerly gusts reached a 45-70 mph range. Redding, down at 500' elevation, has seen five days with wind gusts of at least 30 mph. March lightning to date has totally missed several inland counties. The main strike concentrations have been along the immediate coast or in the Sacramento Valley and its eastern foothills.

Percent of Normal Precipitation (%)
3/1/2006 – 3/27/2006

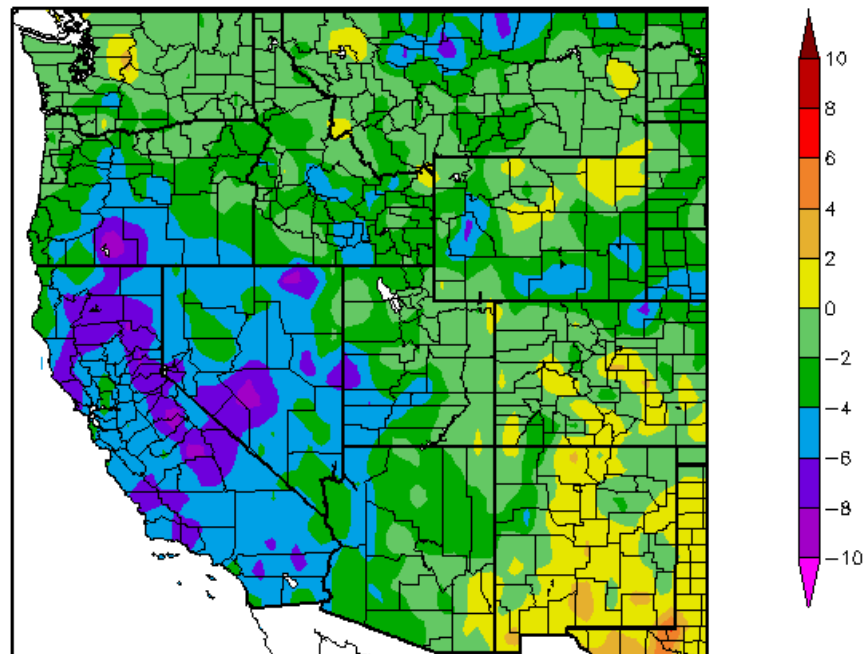


Generated 3/28/2006 at HPRCC using provisional data.

NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Figure 1

Departure from Normal Temperature (F)
3/1/2006 – 3/27/2006



Generated 3/28/2006 at HPRCC using provisional data.

NOAA Regional Climate Centers

Figure 2

FORECAST DISCUSSION FOR APRIL 2006:

The longer-range weather map runs in late March are so far indicating that at least the first half of April 2006 will be wetter and at least a little cooler than long-term normals. An active north Pacific storm track will continue, with a tendency for storms to split in the Gulf of Alaska, but have a good portion of their energy directed southeast toward OR and California. We should continue to see low pressure troughs come along in greater-than-normal depth and frequency through April 15th, and maybe beyond. Any breaks of dry and warmer weather will likely be confined to 2-4 days duration through at least mid-month.

At this time, the forecast is for the latter third of April to trend back to climatological normals, i.e. into a warmer and drier pattern, with more high pressure dominance and weaker, less frequent Pacific cold fronts. It should be noted however, that confidence on this is not high. Given the forecast weather for the first half (or more?) of April, look for the higher-mountain snowpack to diminish little over the month, and in some areas to continue increase a little through the 15th or 20th. The bulk of April will likely see gradient winds varying from SE to SSW (pre-frontal) to periods of 1-3 days with West to NW (post-frontal). At this point, no extended foehn wind events of any consequence are expected before at least the 20th. Confidence level for the forecasts below is 60-70% through mid-April, dropping to 50-60% for the latter third of the month.

5. FUELS

FINE - GRASS STAGE	GREEN	X	CURED			
NEW GROWTH	SPARSE		NORMAL		ABOVE NORMAL	X

LIVE FUEL MOISTURE (sage, deciduous, conifer):

NA

1000 HOUR DEAD FUEL MOISTURE:

Above 30% all areas
(per 3/28 WFAS map)

6. ACTUAL OCCURRENCE /ACRES BURNED YEAR TO DATE: Fires Acres
80 2,799

WRITTEN FORECAST SUMMARY FOR APRIL:

Geographic Area	Northern California
Precipitation Outlook	April 1-15th: Ranging from 100-190% of normal April 16-30th: Ranging from 70-115% of normal.
Temperature Outlook	April 1-15th: Ranging from -1.0 to -5.5° F departure from normal. April 16-30th: Ranging from -2.0 to +1.50° F departure from normal.
Fuels and Fire Danger Concerns	Dead fuels remain moist and/or snow-covered across the GACC heading into April, and there are no Fire Danger concerns at this time. Most of North Ops will have Normal fire potential for the month (i.e. very little), with an area in the north depicted as Below normal (see map)
Prescribed fire implications	Weather and fuel conditions will likely preclude <u>significant</u> prescribed burning through at least April 20 th above 3000' elevation. Standing dormant or dead brush is likely the only fuel type that could be burned in the present situation. Dry wind events can still cause rapid fire spread in these fuels.
Miscellaneous	The GACC has adequate resources at this time.

For additional input regarding forecast March weather, see the NWS 30- and 90-day temp and precipitation maps for the month. The recently updated forecasts can be found at this URL:

http://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/products/predictions/multi_season/13_seasonal_outlooks/color/page2.gif.

April North Ops

